



Weill Cornell Medical College

The Weill Cornell Center for Human Rights

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Evaluations

April evaluations: 4
 Total evaluations to date: 203
 Total clients: 177

Upcoming Events

Spring Debrief
 May 27, 2015

Announcements

The 2015 Faculty Appreciation Potluck will be held on Monday, June 8 at 7:00 PM. Location TBD.

Please look out for an email from Sarah Littlehale about our upcoming WCCHR faculty-student lunches!



Third Annual New York Asylum Network Luncheon

On April 11th, 2015, we hosted the Third Annual New York Asylum Network Luncheon. This year’s networking event focused on “The Changing Landscape for Our Most Vulnerable Clients” and provided a forum for members of established and emerging organizations to connect and problem solve around the common challenges faced in serving our most vulnerable asylum seekers. The luncheon was open to professionals and students across all disciplines working in the area of asylum. It opened with an introduction from an asylee, Adam, who told his inspirational story. This introduction was followed by a series of short speeches that elucidated the current challenges faced by asylum seekers of particularly vulnerable backgrounds – LGBT clients, victims of domestic violence, and children and adolescent asylum seekers. To address these important issues, our keynote speakers included Aaron Morris, the Legal Director at Immigration Equality, Judge Judy Kluger, the Executive Director of Sanctuary for Families, and Dr. Carol Kessler, a child psychiatrist and member of the Asylum Network at Physicians for Human Rights. Our hope is that attendees of the Luncheon felt empowered and more informed about how they can better serve asylum seekers from diverse and vulnerable backgrounds.

Upcoming Event: Spring Debrief

The WCCHR Spring Debrief will be held on **Wednesday, May 27** (Time TBD). The Spring Debrief is a great opportunity for students to reflect on their experiences as volunteers and share them with others in an open discussion. As volunteers participating in asylum evaluations, we encounter clients who have histories of severely traumatic experiences and learn about them in great detail. Volunteers can be emotionally or mentally affected by these encounters in various ways. The purpose of the Debrief is thus to provide a forum for students to share how their experiences in asylum evaluations have impacted them and to ask any questions they may have. This discussion will be led by Dr. Susan Ball. Dr. Ball is an Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine and Assistant Director of the Bernbaum Unit, Center for Special Studies at New York Presbyterian Hospital, where she has cared for patients with HIV/AIDS for over twenty years. Recently, she published a new book titled “Voices in the Band: A Doctor, Her Patients, and How the Outlook on AIDS Care Changed from Doomed to Hopeful.” We are delighted and honored to have Dr. Ball lead this event and promote self-care among WCCHR volunteers. Please join us for dinner and an engaging discussion!

In the News

Child Marriage Banned in Malawi

—*The Guardian, February 26, 2015*

Malawi has the highest rate of child marriage in the world. More than half of all girls are married to older men as children. Child marriage then leads to “grinding poverty, gender-based violence, and the inescapable inequality that girls experience every day.” Since 2011, girls in Malawi have fought for their rights through the Stop Child Marriage campaign, led by the Girls Empowerment Network (Genet) and Let Girls Lead. Recently, they have celebrated a great accomplishment: new government legislation that raises the legal age of marriage from 15 to 18, essentially banning child marriage in Malawi. Men who marry underage girls and parents who marry off underage daughters can now be penalized for these acts. Although the legislation will be put in place, however, human rights advocates recognize that deeply ingrained cultural beliefs and traditions may hinder actual enforcement of the law. Still, they remain optimistic about the future. Click on the link below for more...



Photo credit: Graeme Robertson, The Guardian

Link to article: <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/feb/26/girl-activists-child-marriage-malawi-let-girls-lead>

Spotlight on...

Casey Krebs, MS4

Casey Krebs is a fourth year medical student at WCMC and is currently on a research gap year in Lima, Peru. She is spending the year working on infectious disease research and developing screening tests for neglected tropical diseases. Originally from York, PA, Casey attended Wake Forest University and majored in Spanish. After college she worked as an Americorps VISTA member in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico and later in an immunology laboratory at the University of Pennsylvania. She first became involved with WCCHR during her first year of medical school, and has continued attending asylum evaluations for the past three years. Casey's involvement with the Center and her global health experiences have motivated her to apply for a residency in internal medicine and become involved in providing health care to recent immigrants in the United States.



Rev. Carol Kessler, M.D., M.Div.

Dr. Carol Kessler is a graduate of the Brown University Program in Medicine and of Union Theological Seminary. She completed adult and child psychiatry residency programs at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx, NY. She is also an ordained pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. She currently serves as a community psychiatrist in the Highbridge section of the Bronx where she works with children and their families with Astor Services for Children. Since 1987, when Dr. Kessler first volunteered in El Salvador during its twelve-year civil war, Dr. Kessler has worked with the Central American community in New York and as a voluntary consultant to mental health programs in El Salvador and in Mexico. She has documented her work in a chapter of the book, *Disaster Psychiatry: Intervening when Nightmares Come True*. For more than a decade, Dr. Kessler has served as a volunteer with Physicians for Human Rights' Asylum Program. She is also an avid volunteer faculty evaluator for the Weill Cornell Center for Human Rights.

